



CA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS NAME

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

Self-Advocacy 2

CSB Library 3

Yoga 5

WASC
Update 6

Family
Workshop 7

Farm to CSB-
A Short
Course 7

Summer
Academies 9

Braille Bites

California School for the Blind

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Superintendent's Message

By: Sharon Sacks

Welcome to the Winter issue of Braille Bites. Our students have been engaged in numerous fun and educational activities. Each year our Orientation & Mobility staff coordinate a trip to Ana Nuevo to learn about the elephant seals. A group of new CSB students ventured to the coast to experience the sights, smells, and sounds of the elephant seal community.

Our elementary classrooms traveled on BART to the San Francisco Lighthouse. The students were given a tour. They were able to visit the MAD Lab, the accessible kitchen, and explore the Lighthouse store. The highlight of the day was when the students made cotton candy.

Our Residential Program has sponsored several fun events. Read about the Valentines Dance. Our students love socializing and dancing to great DJ music provided by Paul Dominguez.

This issue includes articles by our school librarian Elizabeth Hart. She describes all of the resources available to our students and to professionals. Did you know our Library Catalogue can be accessed through the school's website? Three transition classes are learning about the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and the rights and responsibilities



available to persons with disabilities. One of our students has written an article describing his experiences.

It is exciting to report that **CSB** completed its WASC Accreditation visit in February. Gina Ouellette, our WASC coordinator, has an update included in this issue.

I hope you enjoy Braille Bites. We are proud of our students and their successes, and value our amazing staff. Enjoy the issue!

Valentine's Day Dance

By: Charles Udeze, Supervising Counselor

On February 14th, 2017, the Residential department hosted a school wide Valentine's Day Dance at **CSB**. The event was organized by the staff of Westridge dorm. The evening started with a delicious heart-shaped cheese and pepperoni pizza & Caesar salad for all students that attended. Compliments to our kitchen staff. Our students had a fun time. The dance music was provided by one of our counselors Paul and the dining hall was decorated with bright colors to match the event.



Self-Advocacy

By: Nathan Pearce, Student

Self-Advocacy is to stick up for yourself and what you need or want for your personal needs and rights. We have been learning self-advocacy now for a while. We started last year and continue to learn about disability rights. The definition self-advocacy, according to dictionary.com is to stand up for yourself in a positive way, in a positive attitude.

We are learning about the American Disability Act and also learning about the National Federation of the Blind. These organizations help blind and visually impaired people by supporting them with problems and solutions. If a blind person thinks that their rights have been violated, there are ways to get answers.

The best and most important things I have learned from self-advocacy is how to tell people what accommodations I need for an assignment or the appropriate technology to finish my paperwork. I feel honored to be in this class because I am learning things I didn't know before and wish that I could have known sooner.

CSB Library

By: Elizabeth Hart, Librarian

The **CSB** student library provides materials in a variety of formats, including 5000 regular print books, 2000 large print books, 3000 braille books, 1000 print/braille books, 400 uncontracted braille books, 100 descriptive DVDs, 2500 books on cassette, 1000 audio CDs, 40 digital talking books, and 60 Playaways. Included in the collection are award winning Newbery, Caldecott, California Young Reader Medal, Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal, and Odyssey Audiobook Award titles. Also available for students to check out are adapted games, such as chess, checkers, Uno, Scrabble, Backgammon, Othello, Go Fish, braille playing cards, Connect Four, Monopoly, and tactile dice.

In addition, there is a professional library that houses titles of interest for both staff and parents. The storage room contains a variety of equipment and manipulatives for staff and student use.

The library has other interesting items, such as a tactile globe based on satellite data, taxidermy specimens of a bear, a raccoon, a pig, a monkey, and a coyote, and carved artwork by Sargent Johnson, one of the first African American artists to earn a national reputation. There is also a display of historical mechanical braillewriters, including one manufactured by Smith & Corona, and others from Germany, Denmark, and Great Britain. There is even a real human skeleton in the storage room!

Every month a new display highlights a specific collection of titles. For example, in January books that have been made into movies were featured, in February books for Black History Month were displayed, and in March Women's History month was highlighted.

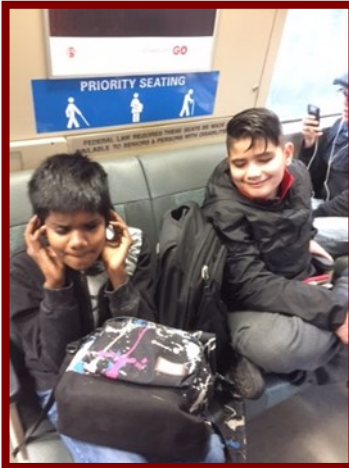
The variety of titles in different formats allows students to find a book for enjoyment or for research, and provides staff with additional information on a variety of topics. Students, staff, and parents can use the online catalog (<http://csb.booksys.net/opac/csb/>) to look for books of interest, and even read book reviews of the different titles.



A visit to the Lighthouse for the Blind

By: Annie Turner, SSA

On February 8th, Ms. Hody and Mrs. Pica's students (Xavier, Mariyah, Mitzy, Maryam, Ahmad, Riley, Tony, and Melanie) along with Caiti O'Mailor and Annie Turner, went on an all-day adventure trip to the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco. The students learned to use the BART system from Fremont to San Francisco. They experienced using the ticket terminals, escalators, and a tall flight of stairs. It was a rainy day and the system had some computer difficulties, so we also experienced delays and transferring trains. Several of the students



were very interested in following the map to see where we were along the route. We were very thankful to the considerate fellow BART riders who assisted us to the front of the line and also finding seats on the train.



When we arrived at the Lighthouse for the Blind, we met Jamey and Richie who gave us an informative tour of their beautiful new 11 story building with great views of the city. They took us to their teaching kitchen fully equipped with necessary kitchen utensils and gadgets, including all tops of stovetops. Then we stopped by their store where the students took time to explore talking watches, canes, technology equipment, magnifiers, and many other items. We continued on to visit their computer labs, craft room, boardroom, and offices. On the far side of the building were the Residential Facilities. This is where either adult

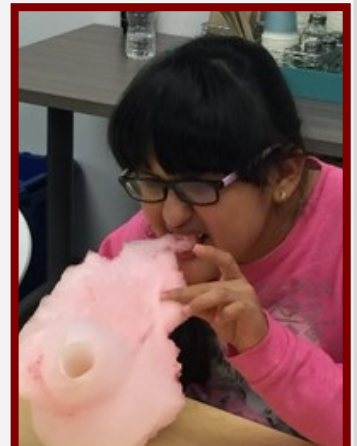
individuals or families stay when they come for a weekend program. Next to the Residential Facilities was a lounge with a variety of colorful comfortable chairs and couches. This is where we stopped and enjoyed our lunches.

After lunch the students each made their own cotton candy snack.

When asked what they learned or what their favorite part of the trip was, the student responses were: "about the programs, they do Braille Challenge there, about the dorms, what you can cook in the kitchen, using a monocular on BART, making cotton candy, riding BART and transferring trains, meeting Windsor Jamey's guide dog".



The Lighthouse for the Blind provides many great learning opportunities for students alone or with their families. Visit their website at www.lighthouse-sf.org. For information specifically about youth programs send an email to youth@lighthouse-sf.org or call (415) 863-3688 and ask for Jamey or Richie. In addition to the areas described above, they offer Braille Translation, Skills training, Deaf-Blind Services, Counseling, Employment Immersion and many more. The Lighthouse is also the host of the Enchanted Hills Camp where many **CSB** students participated in an outdoor education program last year and many have attended their summer programs.



InSight Yoga

By: Nancy Yates, Yoga Instructor

This program encompasses: balance, coordination, focus and most of all body consciousness, through breath awareness, imagery, movement, and spirit. For example: each session begins seated on the mat starting by sensing the breath, placing one hand on the belly and one hand on the heart, going *inside* and just feeling the air in and out of the body. Simple but not so simple. It takes motivation and willingness to be open to discovery. That's where my job comes in as a teacher---to be as aware as I can, no matter how many students, to create a dynamic where I am almost in their consciousness, feeling, that moment connecting with them--- at times with eyes closed. Being sharp, covering the room all the way around, living that moment, that awakens with them and working together to help guide and expand their relationship with themselves and the world.

I call upon things from news articles, physical facts, it varies. The intention here is to connect the breath with the body and, so *it slowly begins* to happen and we start to calm down and let the breathing drop into the belly.

These Yoga sessions allow us to be who we are *safely* in the present moment with our powerful breath, to begin from that point. Some of the things we might do is pretend/imagine shampooing hair with our hands on our scalp, place our finger tips on the corners of our eyes, relaxing our eye balls, squeezing our ear lobes when we need to pause while listening to the sound of our breath especially when we have the "blues" or wake up feeling frustrated or anxious and can't focus. We giggle (FUN!) relaxing all 300 muscles in our face, releasing tension, while bringing oxygen and blood flow to our body, we begin to "wake-up." We do poses like Downward Dog, 4 or 5Xs with gradual, advanced variations, Cat Cow Pose, Cobra, in between each of these we go into relaxed Child Pose to become utterly still and observe the breath, while noticing the unique sound, texture and movement. Every class is different, though there are consistent poses with variations, depending on the mood of the students, which I sense as they come into the gymnasium. I give them facts like 25 trillion cells in the body that needs oxygen & blood flow to nourish our muscles and brain e.g. in goal ball, dancing, sports, Olympic champions, musicians and humor to perk them up with understanding and sharp awareness on an individual basis within a group environment. I'm an observer and it's my job to keep it moving....always going back to the breath. That's how I endeavor to keep them awake and interested. Yoga brings a greater understanding and acceptance of themselves, that connection with the universe, others and their own sense of self, their own internal universe and the realization of their own power---it's all about energy, focus and relationship with the breath. This program clearly serves the individual and brings them in relationship with the BREATH, moment by moment in the confines of a safe & loving place to learn the power of the body consciousness with love and acceptance. The difference that makes the difference in this Program is relationship with the breath. I have witnessed transformations of individuals experiencing their sense of self. I end each session requesting one word from each person describing their class experience. Examples: good, happy, tired, bored, relaxed, calm, excited, love it, better, strong, awful and some will have no answer, and that's okay.

We close in a seated position, with our palms on our lap, connecting the thumb & index finger. We chant OM and Shanti and then we all stand, hold hands and exclaim Namaste! It's a beautiful thing to see. I am humbled. We are happy.

WASC update

By Gina Ouellette, Director of Student Services

CSB is currently in the process of pursuing accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) as a Supplementary Educational Program (SEP). This process involves conducting a critical self-evaluation of existing programs, services, policies, procedures, governance, and facilities at **CSB**.

In December 2016, the initial accreditation document was completed and submitted to WASC, along with supporting evidence in the form of achievement data, manuals, plans, handbooks, etc.

We are pleased to announce that our initial document was accepted by WASC, and our initial visit has been confirmed. On February 23rd and 24th, an independent Visiting Committee composed of three educators from outside of **CSB** will be present on our campus for a two-day visit. During the visit, the Visiting Committee will observe each classroom and each dormitory on campus, attend a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, and meet with major stakeholder groups, including parents, faculty, residential staff, and administration. At the conclusion of their visit, the Committee will debrief with the **CSB** leadership team in order to review their final report, which will include their summary of observed strengths as well as a list of specific recommendations.

After leaving **CSB**, the Visiting Committee will make a formal recommendation to the WASC Commission regarding whether **CSB** should be granted initial accreditation or candidacy for accreditation. Initial accreditation is for schools that meet the WASC criteria for full accreditation and have a history and support system indicating a high-quality program that can be sustained into the foreseeable future. Candidacy is a status of affiliation indicating that an institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward, but does not yet assume, accreditation.

The WASC Commission meets three times per year. The next meeting will be held on April 24-25, 2017. At that time, the commission will review the Visiting Committee's recommendation and make the final determination whether or not to grant accreditation status. The school will be notified by the executive director of the Commission's action. If the Commission's action is favorable, the school will be granted either initial accreditation or candidacy for a period of time not to exceed three years. At the conclusion of the initial period, CSB will undergo another self-study review and a new committee will visit **CSB** for a more extensive, 3- to 4-day visit.

We are optimistic about our potential to finally become an accredited institution, and excited about using the accreditation process as a means to improving services and programs for students on our campus and across the state of California.

Disney on ice

The coordinators of the Disney on Ice productions invited Ms. Hody's, Ms. Pica's and Ms. Chang's class to the Oracle arena to get a behind the scenes look at the production.

Students were allowed to touch props, costumes and also got to meet Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. All three classes had a blast.



Family Workshops at CSB

By: Stacey Colley

On Saturday, October 15th and 22nd 2016, Katie Smith and Stacey Colley planned and taught two Family Workshops for over 20 CSB families! On October 15th, Yurika Vu, Veronica Gunn, Vanessa Herndon, Thanh Chang, Gaby Cohen, and Maureen Green taught daily living skills including: organization, stove and microwave safety/use, and food preparation. On October 22nd, Scott Smith, Veronica Gunn, and Adrian Amandi taught O&M and assistive technology skills including: map making, direction giving/taking, and smart phone accessibility. Both workshops were a success! Thank you to all teaching staff and interpreters (Carla Shah, Thuy Tran, and Jami Ordenana) for your expertise.

We couldn't have done it without you! It was a great experience working closely with the families of our students on skills for independence.



Annual Año Nuevo Trip

By: Jim Blackshear & Erica Hogle, O&M

This year's **CSB**'s visit to Año Nuevo State Park was a hit! This annual field trip has been a staff and student favorite for more than 10 years. A docent named Hai visited **CSB** in January to prepare the students with information before they came. Hai shared many interesting



facts about the park. For example: At sea, elephant seals typically dive for 20 minutes to a depth of 1,000 to 2,000 feet in search of food. Hai also talked to the students about how to listen to the various sounds that can be heard at the park. Every year students and families are warned ahead of time that the trip will happen “rain or shine!” This year on February 2nd it was indeed raining, but 16 students and several staff members braved the elements to visit the elephant seals in their natural habitat while exploring the coast on a docent led tour of the park. More than one student said that

they had never been to a beach! The students learned how to tell the difference between the sounds that the mother seals made compared to their pups.



CSB staff enjoyed offering this trip to all of our new students and are looking forward to next year's excursion.

Farm to CBS - A Short Course

By: Kylie Breuer

CSB hosted another successful short course! During the week of December 12th, 5 students came to **CSB** to participate in "Farm to CSB", a short course focusing on horticulture taught by Shelby Zimmerman, Scott Smith, and Kylie Breuer. The students planted garlic in the garden behind the rocket shop and created their own planter kits to grow at home. They harvested herbs, onions, and a tiny carrot from the garden behind Ms. Hody's classroom, and dried them in a dehydrator (later they put the ingredients on homemade pizzas!). Students learned about the science and growing of plants, explored the parts of plant, and discussed the life cycle of a plant.

The short course students went on several field trips; at Berkeley Bowl they discovered unique produce, at Urban Adamah they learned about farming, fed chickens, and pet goats, and at Shadow Cliffs Regional Park they learned about several native trees and plants. The students also went to the Kaiser Farmer's Market in Fremont to learn about farmer's markets and local foods, and went to Dale Hardware to learn about seasonal plants and herbs.

On Wednesday, Imperfect Produce came to **CSB** to teach our students about "imperfect" fruits and vegetables that farmers cannot sell to grocery stores, and how this leads to food and water waste. Then the students made smoothies using a bicycle-powered blender!

Thank you to all staff who helped us make this week such a successful one. We couldn't have done it without your help and support!



Summer Academies at CSB

June 12-16, 2017: Technology and Sports Academy
(13-17 year olds) **Registration deadline: May 1st**

June 12-16, 2017: Ready, Set, Go! (O&M and Daily Living Skills)
(13-17 year olds) **Registration deadline: May 1st**

June 19-23, 2017: Technology and Sports Academy
(9-13 year olds) **Registration deadline: May 8th**

June 19-23, 2017: Fine Arts Academy
(9-13 year olds) **Registration deadline: May 8th**

June 26-30, 2017: Advanced Computer Science
(Middle School and High School) **Registration deadline: May 15th**

June 26-30, 2017: Let's Get Active
(Middle School and High School) **Registration deadline: May 15th**

July 9-29, 2017: Summer Transition Education Program (STEP)
(16-22 year olds, **MUST** be Department of Rehab clients)



For course descriptions and an application, please visit our website at:
www.csb-cde.ca.gov

WHAT'S COMING UP AT CSB?

March: 30th - Early dismissal

April: 6th - Prom

17th - Spring Break begins

28th - 30th - Senior Trip

May: 17th - Spring Concert Matinee

18th - Evening Spring Concert

25th - Early Dismissal

26th - Staff Development - No School

29th - Memorial Day Holiday

June: 2nd - Last day of school



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